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Amelia Jenks Bloomer

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DYER USHER, who died at Covington, in Linn County, on the 11th of December, was one of the earliest pioneers in the Cedar Valley. He emigrated from New York in an early day, first settling in Ohio, when that was a new country. About the year 1836 he moved to the then far west, and took up a claim near Moscow, in what is now Muscatine County. In 1839 Mr. Usher moved up the Cedar Valley, six miles north of Cedar Rapids, where he established "Usher's Ferry" across the river. He lived on good terms with the Musquakie Indians, with whom he often hunted, and carried on a large trade for many years. They called him *Nisheshin Schomokoman*, which signifies "good white man." He was a fine specimen of the early settler, tall, straight and well proportioned. He possessed an iron constitution, and dressed in the garb of the hunters of that period. He might have been the model for the bronze figure of the pioneer in the group which stands at the west entrance of the Capitol grounds. He was as expert with the old muzzle-loading, flint-lock rifle as Daniel Boone or David Crockett, and was proud of his skill with that weapon which especially belonged to his era of American frontier life.

CAPTAIN W. F. VERMILION, of Centerville, died at his home, December 28, after a brief illness. He was an early settler in Appanoose County, having located at Iconium in 1857. He was commissioned Captain of Company F, in the 36th Regiment of Iowa Infantry Volunteers, early in 1862, and served gallantly through the rebellion. At the close of the war he entered upon the practice of the law at Centerville, and in 1869 was elected to the State Senate. He was an intelligent and useful legislator and acquired a wide acquaintance in the State during his term of four years.

AMELIA JENKS BLOOMER, who died at her home in Council Bluffs, December 30, acquired world-wide fame as a dress-reformer nearly half a century ago. She was born in Cortland County, New York, in 1818, and when a girl of nineteen, became interested in the pioneer movement then being organized to secure an enlargement of the rights of women. In this work she became associated with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Abby Kelley, and other leaders of the movement. In 1840 Amelia Jenks married D. C. Bloomer, a lawyer residing at Seneca Falls, and soon after began to write for the press in advocacy of women's rights. In 1849 she established a semi-monthly paper, "The Lilly," devoted to temperance and the rights of women. It was ably conducted and soon reached a circulation of over 4,000. Mrs. Bloomer was a good public speaker and for many years lectured upon the two reforms in which she was so deeply interested. She was for several years associate editor of *The Western Home Journal*, a literary weekly. About the year 1851 a friend of hers, Elizabeth Smith Miller, (a daughter of Gerrit Smith) appeared in public dressed in a costume of her own invention, consisting of skirts reaching but little below the knee and wide Turkish trousers gathered at the ankle. Mrs. Bloomer soon after adopted the new costume and advocated it as a needed sanitary reform in women's dress. The public named the new costume "The Bloomer." For several years the dress reform found many advocates and patrons among women, but it was neither graceful nor becoming, and ridicule and fashion were weapons too powerful for it. "The Bloomers" gradually disappeared and the woman who was not the inventor found her name inseparably attached to the costume which she discarded many years before. Mrs. Bloomer was one of the organizers of the Iowa Woman's Suffrage Association, and its president for some time. When she began her work in 1845 for the rights of women, but three occupations were open to them, viz., housework, sewing and teaching. She lived to see them admitted into almost any occupation they may choose, elected to various public offices, and wholly or partially enfranchised in a large number of States and nations. Mr. and Mrs. Bloomer lived forty-one years in the beautiful home they selected in early days on the bluff overlooking the great Missouri valley and city of Omaha. There they celebrated a happy golden wedding four years ago, honored and respected by all who knew them.

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